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THE OPERATION OF COMPANY "E", 151ST INFANTRY
(38TH INFANTRY DIVISION) AT CABALLO ISLAND,
27 MARCH 1945 - 10 APRIL 1945.
(LUZON CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Executive
Officer and Company Commander)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY BATTALION
ASSAULTING A SMALL ISLAND

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THE OPERATION OF COMPANY "E", 151ST INFANTRY
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INTRODUCTION

"The U. S. Sixth Army opened the Luzon Campaign on 9 January 1945, in an amphibious assault landing on beaches in the Lingayen Gulf area of Central Luzon with the I and XIV Corps abreast, the XIV Corps on the right." (1)

The XIV Corps pushed rapidly southward through the Central plains and into Manila. On 4 March 1945, Manila was secured and occupied by elements of the XIV Corps. (See Map A) (2)

The XI Corps, under Eighth Army control, made an amphibious assault landing in the San Antonio - San Narcisco area on 29 January 1945. Control passed to the Sixth Army on 30 January 1945. This force opened Subic Bay and isolated Bataan Peninsula. (3) (See Map A)

On 15 February 1945, the 151st RCT, reinforced, 38th Division, secured the southern tip of Bataan at Marvalies in a shore to shore amphibious operation from Subic Bay. (See Map A) (4) This force moved east and joined elements of the 1st RCT to secure the northern shores of Manila Bay. (See Map A) (5)

On 16 February 1945, the 503d Parachute RCT and the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry, landed on Corregidor Island

(1) (2) A-5, p. 1; (3) A-5, p. 2; (4) A-5, p. 51;
Personal knowledge; (5) A-5, p. 51.

and proceeded to destroy the enemy on the island. (See Map A) (6) On 24 February 1945, the 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry relieved the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry on Corregidor. (7)

Between 2 March 1945 and 3 April 1945, elements of the 11th Airborne Division cleaned-up Japanese resistance on the Southern Coast of Manila Bay in the vicinity of Ternate in the Province of Cavite. (See Map A) (8)

The combination of all these actions secured the ground and shores surrounding Manila Bay. (See Map A) Part of the overall mission of Sixth Army was to open Manila Bay to shipping. (9)

While clearing Bataan Peninsula of organized resistance and taking Corregidor Island opened the North Channel to Manila Bay and permitted Navy minesweepers to start clearing the North Channel, it did not secure the entrance to Manila Bay, several small islands, Caballo, El Fraile and Carabao, controlled the Southern Channel. (See Map A) (10) "Sixth Army Field Order 58, 23 March 1945, directed XI Corps to capture Caballo Island." (11)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

After the reduction of Corregidor and the departure of the 503rd Parachute RCT from Corregidor, the 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry (38 Division), remained to garrison and complete mopping up on Corregidor. It is at this loca-

(6) (7) A-5, p. 53; Personal Knowledge; (8) A-8, p. 102, 103; (9) A-5, p. 49; (10) A-5, p. 56; (11) A-5, p. 73, 78; A-6, p. 141.

tion we find the unit with which we will be further concerned. (See Map B) (12)

The XI Corps assigned the mission of seizing Caballo Island to the 38th Division in Field Order #10, dated 23 March 1945. The 151st Infantry was assigned the mission and the 2nd Battalion was selected as the assault battalion. (13)

It was estimated from documents captured on Corregidor that the enemy strength on Caballo was 522. (14) These troops were from assorted units and were primarily Naval personnel. Their combat efficiency was unknown. (15)

THE BATTALION SITUATION

It had been anticipated that the 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry, would be assigned the mission of seizing Caballo, and permission had been obtained to send a reconnaissance patrol to Caballo on 20 March 1945. (16) This patrol, consisting of the 2nd Platoon, Company E, led by the Company Commander, found that the best beach for landing was on the east coast of the island. (17) It, also, encountered heavy resistance from enemy machine gun, rifle and mortar fire and determined that the enemy's defense was concentrated in the center of the island. It was impossible to determine the actual strength of the enemy. However, the strength was estimated by the patrol to be approximately a reinforced company. The patrol located a few scat-

(12) A-5, p. 78; (13) A-1, p. 50; (14) A-1, p. 50 & 123; (15) (16) Personal Knowledge; (17) Personal knowledge; A-5, p. 78.

tered mines but was unable to mark them. (18) Orders had been given for the patrol not to engage itself in any fire fight with the enemy. Thus, it was repulsed from the island by heavy fire before the reconnaissance was completed. So intense and accurate was the enemy fire that most of the members of the patrol returned with bullet holes through some part of their clothing or equipment. No one was seriously wounded. (19)

Plans for the operation against Caballe were made in the 2nd Battalion C. P. on Corregidor by the Division Commander, Regimental Commander, Battalion Commander and staff and representatives of the Navy and Air Corps in a conference held on 25 March 1945. (20) It was decided to establish an OP at Monkey Point, on Corregidor, to observe any enemy activity on Caballe. (See Map B) (21) The weather was clear and observation was good to the north side of the island. (22) The Battalion Commander made a personal aerial reconnaissance in an artillery liaison plane.

THE BATTALION PLAN OF ATTACK

The battalion planned to assault Caballe with Company E and Company G in column, Company E was to lead the assault and Company G was to follow and mop-up. Company F was to remain at Black Beach on Corregidor in readiness to reinforce the attacking units, if necessary. Artillery support consisted of one battalion of 105mm Howitzers

(18) (19) Personal Knowledge; (20) A-2, Caballo Island;
(21) A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Knowledge; (22) Personal Knowledge;

(minus) on Corregidor and one battery of 155mm Howitzers from positions at Cabcaben on Bataan. (23) 81mm mortars of Company H and Company D were set up on Corregidor to fire at maximum range and support the assault. (24) The air corps was to soften up the enemy prior to landing by bombing and strafing. The Navy was to employ two destroyers, one on each side of the island, to engage and fire on any enemy positions located in the cliffs facing the sea. (See Map B) (25) The accomplishment of all these plans would permit a complete blanket of fire to be laid down on the entire island.

THE COMPANY PLAN

"E" Company Commander received the battalion order and plan of attack late in the evening on 25 March 1945. He immediately started making his plans to employ the company in compliance with the battalion order. The plan consisted of landing on the east beach with three platoons abreast. (See Map C) (26) The LMGs were to be attached to platoons. The mortar section of weapons platoon and Company Headquarters were to follow in the rear of the center platoon. The mortar section was to move inland approximately fifty yards and set up to support the advance. Company Headquarters was to move on behind the center platoon to Hill 1 and establish the Company C.P. on Hill 1 after it had been taken. The company was then to move to

(23) A-1, p. 50; (24) Personal Knowledge; A-2 Caballe Island; (25) Personal Knowledge; A-1, p. 50; (26) A-2 Caballe Island; Personal Knowledge.

Hills 2 and 3 on company order. (See Map C) (27)

All men in the company at this time had about two months combat experience on Bataan and Corregidor. Confidence in themselves and in their leaders was good. Morale was high.

The enemy situation on Corregidor permitted freedom of movement on high ground during daylight.

The preparation and orientation for the operation were completed on 26 March 1945. The Company Commander took the officers and non-commissioned officers of the company to a vantage point on Corregidor and went over each phase of the operation with them. He issued the order for the assault and made sure that every man thoroughly understood the part his unit was to play. Each man was given time to look over the island and get a complete picture in his mind. Questions were asked and answered to the satisfaction of all concerned. When the Company Commander assured himself that all present understood their own mission, the group returned to their units to prepare for the next day's action. (28)

Supply preparation consisted of issuing each man armed with a rifle two bandoleers of ammunition and two grenades, one fragmentation and one white phosphorous. Weapons platoon was to hand carry its weapons and ammunition. All men were to wear Herringbone twills, steel helmet, cartridge belt with canteen, aid kit and entrenching tool. If the

(27) (28) Personal Knowledge.

operation lasted more than one day, rations were to be sent over from Corregidor. Knowing that mines were on the island, wire rods were prepared with a white cloth tied to each rod. These were to be used in marking any mines located as the platoons advanced down the island. These markers were issued to each rifle platoon. (29)

Rosters by boat loads were prepared; and every one was instructed as to the boat in which he was to ride and the loading order. (30)

Late in the afternoon, a hot meal of the best food available was served to the company. The spirit of the men was high and conversation indicated alertness toward the next day's work. By dark all platoons were in their areas making last minute checks and preparations of equipment. (31)

The company was awakened at about 0430, 27 March 1945, and fed a hot breakfast. After breakfast, the company was formed according to boat loads, inspected and moved to San Jose Beach, Black Beach, on Corregidor to load in the LCMs. (32)

THE ASSAULT OF CABALLO

From 0630 to 0830, 27 March 1945, nine B-25s and thirty-four P-51s dropped fifteen tons of demolition bombs and three tons of Nap^{a/m} bombs on Caballe Island. (33)
From 0835 to 0855, the two battalions of artillery and the

(29) (30) (31) (32) Personal Knowledge; (33) A-5, p. 78; A-1, p. 50;

81mm mortars laid fire on the east beach and in the shallow water to detonate any mines present. They, also, fired on likely target areas. The Navy's two Destroyers fired into caves and on probable target positions. (34)

At 0900, 27 March 1945, Company E landed on the east beach of Caballe Island and moved rapidly toward Hill 1. (See Map C) The platoons located several mines scattered, apparently at random, between the beach and Hill 1. These mines were flagged with the markers as the platoons advanced. No casualties were suffered from mines on the entire operation. (35) Hill 1 was occupied by 0915 without opposition. No enemy dead from the supporting fires were found. (36)

The Company Commander ordered the platoons to continue to Hill 2 in their same formation. (See Map C) The platoons moved out down the west side of Hill 1 toward the 2nd objective. The Company CP was established on Hill 1 with orders to remain until called for by the Company Commander. (37)

At 0928, as the head of the company was approaching Hill 2 and the tail of the company was on the west side of Hill 1, murderous enemy machine gun and rifle fire was placed on Company E. Several men were killed and several wounded. The rear ends of the 1st and 2nd platoons and the Company Headquarters were pinned down. (38) The heads of the platoons moved on up the slope to the plateau on Hill

(34) A-1, p. 50; A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Knowledge;
(35) A-5, p. 78; A-1, p. 50; A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Knowledge;
(36) A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Knowledge;
(37) Personal Knowledge; (38) Personal Knowledge; A-2 Caballo Island.

2. It was determined that the enemy fire was coming from this plateau and from the east entrance to the tunnel.
(See Map D) (39)

The platoons continued to advance; firing as they moved. 60 mm mortar fire was called for and laid on the west entrance to the tunnel where two machine guns were located. This drove the machine guns back into the protection of the tunnel. Machine gun and rifle fire continued to come from the east end of the tunnel into the Company CP, Battalion CP and already crowded aid station. The forward platoon placed two twenty-five pound satchel charges in the east tunnel entrance and momentarily stopped this fire. The platoons moved on up the plateau destroying all enemy located and driving those not destroyed back into the mortar pits located on the plateau. (40) Machine gun fire again emitted from the east entrance of the tunnel wounding two men in the company CP. The Battalion Commander called for the Navy's Destroyer on the south side of the island to put direct fire into the tunnel's east entrance and above the entrance in an attempt to seal the tunnel by land slides. This was done, but the angle of fire to the long axis of the tunnel was so great that the fire did not completely obtain the desired results. (See Map D) The company executive officer directed the rocket launcher man of the 1st Platoon on Hill 1 to fire the rocket launcher above the mouth of the tunnel to complete the job. This was done with
(39) (40) Personal Knowledge.

two men from the company headquarters making numerous trips back to the beach for resupply of ammunition. As the rocket launcher man continued to deliver exceedingly accurate fire above the entrance with HE ammunition, the explosions of the rockets caused the land to slide into the mouth of the tunnel and seal it. (41) The company continued to clean up the plateau.

The Company Commander decided to send the 2nd Platoon around the right side, North, of the island and the 1st and 3rd Platoons around the left side, South, and by pass the enemy that had been driven back into the pits and tunnel. These were to be left for G Company which was mopping up in the rear of E Company. (42)

The 2nd Platoon moved to the right and started around the north side of the island on the plateau to Hill 2. The 1st and 3rd Platoons moved to the left with the Company Commander.

As the 2nd Platoon moved up the plateau, it was met with fire from two machine guns. The platoon was halted and the platoon leader informed the Company Commander by SCR 536 Radio that it was impossible to advance around the right side of the island because of the two machine guns and land slides which had blocked the approach. (43)

The Company Commander ordered the platoon to continue on around the right side. Attempts were made but were unsuccessful. Then, the Company Commander ordered the 2nd

(41) Personal Knowledge; A-2 Gaballo Island; (42) Personal Knowledge; (43) Personal Knowledge.

Platoon to rejoin the 1st and 3rd Platoons on the South side of the island. (44) (See Map E)

It is felt, at this time, that a description of Hill 2, will enable the reader to better understand the problems of Company E for the next day.

Hill 2 rises from Manila Bay on the north and south sides, in practically sheer cliffs, to a height of 371 feet. (45) The southwest side of the hill, also, drops into the sea. From the northwest side of the hill the ground tapers off into a sharp ridge that runs west to the end of the island. The east side is a vertical cliff that drops perpendicularly into the mortar pits on the plateau at the east base of Hill 2. (See Map E)

Approaching from the east side of Hill 2, there was an incline on the southeast side of the plateau which rose at about 45 degrees elevation to the ridge on the hill. This ridge, about two feet wide, ran north at about 30 degrees elevation up to the top of the hill. The entire hill was devoid of vegetation. Loose rock covered the ridge and hill top. On the top of the hill there was a concrete OP. (See Map E) (46)

The Company Commander led the three platoons up the 45 degree incline on the southeast side of the plateau and to the ridge of Hill 2. As each man made a mad dash to reach the protection of the ridge, enemy machine gun fire followed him up the incline licking at his heels. We all wondered

(44) Personal Knowledge; (45) A-3, p. 13; (46) A-3, p. 13; A-1, p. 50; Personal Knowledge.

why the enemy did not elevate his guns to fire a few feet higher. Had he done so, we would have been denied Hill 2 at this time. (47)

With the bulk of the company on the ridge, the ascent to the top began. The company had to move by crawling and creeping as the machine guns in the mortar pits were zeroed in on the ridge. The ridge, being only about two feet wide, afforded no cover to a man standing or crouching. Sheer cliffs dictated a single file. The movement was slow and enemy fire was continuous. Four men were killed; several wounded and a few injured in the ascent to the top of the hill. (48)

Darkness closed in and E Company was located just short of the crest of the hill. There was a cliff about ten feet high between E Company and the crest. There was no way to go around this cliff and no apparent way of ascending it. Contrary to company policy, movement above ground after dark was necessary at this time. The leading members of the company started looking for a means of getting up this cliff. The others clung to the ground to avoid enemy fire and falling off the cliffs. Some tied their belts to roots and rocks to aid in holding themselves. Loose rocks rolled down the cliffs into the mortar pits and the enemy opened fire with automatic 20 mm antiaircraft guns against the side of the cliff. (49)

The platoon sergeant of the 1st Platoon and a couple

(47) (48) (49) Personal Knowledge.

of others managed to scale the cliffs and work their way to the top of the hill and to the concrete OP. There was no enemy there. They returned to the top of the cliff and started moving the company up the cliff. Most of the remainder of the night was spent in getting those not wounded or dead up to the top of the hill. The dead were left behind. The wounded were given aid and they worked their way back down the ridge to a point from which they could be evacuated the next day. Enemy 20 mm, machine gun and rifle fire from the pits continued throughout the night.

At dawn, 28 March 1945, we find the bulk of Company E on the crest of Hill 2 in and around the concrete OP. The company was crowded onto a small knob about fifteen yards wide and twenty yards long, the highest point on the island. (See Map E) (50)

Resupply of ammunition, food and water had been impossible. The men on Hill 2 had not had food since the landing. Their canteens were empty. Wounded and dead were still on the ridge. Evacuation had been impossible. (51)

An LCM with a rope gun fired a rope up the south side of the ridge and the wounded were evacuated down the cliff on this rope. Those men with less serious wounds tied the seriously wounded to their backs and carried them down the cliff. The dead were left to be evacuated later. (52)
(See Map E)

To occupy the entire top of Hill 2 and to move on to

(50) A-3, p. 14; Personal Knowledge; (51) Personal Knowledge; (52) A-1, p. 51; A-2 Caballo Island.

Hill 3, it was necessary to move the company across a small saddle between two knolls at the top of the hill. The ridge between these two knolls was about two feet wide and twenty yards long. The Company Commander called for smoke to be laid between the pits and the saddle. The artillery on Corregidor placed the smoke in exactly the proper place, considering the wind, to screen the saddle. The company, less seven men who were unable to go on, moved, on the run, across the ridge in single file under the cover of smoke. The enemy fired blindly into the smoke across the saddle. No casualties were suffered. The seven men were left on the south knoll to occupy it. (53) (See Map E)

At this time, efforts were made to resupply Company E by air. Rope and water had been loaded into the artillery liaison plane and flown from Corregidor. The water was put in metal shell containers from the artillery as they would withstand the drop without parachutes. Several attempts were made to drop this water on the knoll. Finally, one container came to rest without falling off the cliff. This was only enough for each man to get a small taste. However, it was enough to keep them going.

The company moved on toward the west end of the island and Hill 3. (See Map F) While no enemy was encountered during the rest of the day on the northwest side of Hill 2, there were numerous caves and likely gun positions that had to be "Sweated out" and sealed. The company spent the night

(53) A-1, p. 51; A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Knowledge.

occupying the two knolls on Hill 2, and the northwest side of the hill. (See Map F) The enemy continued to fire from the pits. The fire was ineffective. (54)

On the 29th of March, the Company Commander sent the 2nd Platoon on a patrol to Hill 3. They encountered no enemy resistance. The enemy had declined to defend this ground. (See Map F) The remainder of the day was spent in resupply and care of equipment.

To supply the company it was necessary to bring the supplies on an LCM to the north side of the island west of Hill 2. Here it was unloaded on the beach and hand carried up the hill. All supplies had to be put on a pack board in order to allow the carrier to use his hands and pull himself up the hill by rope.

In the period from 30 March to 3 April E Company continued to occupy all the high ground on the island west of Hill 2. Company activities consisted of patrolling, sealing caves and observing into the pits for enemy activity. G Company had surrounded the pits from the east side and contained the enemy. (See Map F) Meanwhile, the battalion had resorted to such plans as using tanks, pouring oil from drums into the pits, dropping bombs into the tunnel ventilating shafts, firing artillery concentrations on the pits, throwing grenades and smoke pots into the pits, making loud speaker broadcasts to the enemy, and dropping surrender pamphlets into the pits. However, the enemy refused to come

(54) Personal Knowledge; A-1, p. 51.

out and surrender. (55)

Late in the afternoon of 3 April, one platoon of Company G relieved Company E on the west end of the island and Company E was sent back to Corregidor for rest and hot food. The company arrived back in its area on Corregidor in time to clean up and eat a hot meal before dark. Shortly after dark most of the company was sound asleep from exhaustion. (56)

During the night the Company Commander received a message from the battalion rear CP on Corregidor that it appeared that the enemy might make an attempt to come out of the pits during the night. If so, Company E was to return to Caballe. (57)

This proved to be true and at 0505, 4 April 1945, the enemy began a suicidal Banzai attack and E Company was called back to Caballe. (58)

Company E was loaded into an LCM at San Jose Beach on Corregidor and started back to Caballe. The plan was to land one squad and one officer on the south beach at the base of Hill 2 to reinforce G Company. The remainder of the company was to continue on the LCM to the east beach and destroy all enemy between the east beach and Hill 2. (59) (See Map G)

The shores of the south beach were exceedingly rocky and the coxswain feared that if he pulled the LCM in too close to the shore he would beach the boat. Thus, he stopped the LCM and lowered the ramp before the boat reached the

(55) A-3, p. 15; A-2 Caballe Island; Personal Knowledge;
(56) (57) Personal Knowledge; (58) A-1, p. 52; A-2
Caballe Island; A-3, p. 15; (59) Personal Knowledge.

shore. The one officer and one squad debarked from the LCM into water nearly neck deep. The last man to leave the LCM was the BAR man. As he stepped off of the ramp, a wave pushed the LCM forward and pinned his leg under the ramp. The company executive officer and the platoon sergeant of the 2nd Platoon ran out on the ramp and pulled him back into the boat. At the same time, the coxswain raised the ramp and started backing the LCM out. As the LCM turned, an enemy machine gun located on the plateau of Hill 2 fired into the LCM hitting the platoon sergeant of the 2nd Platoon and one other man. The LCM continued on to the east beach. En route, aid was given to the two wounded men and they were left on the LCM. As the boat scraped the beach, the Company Commander told the Company Executive Officer to take charge of the 2nd Platoon. The platoon leader had been left on Corregidor with swollen and infected hands and the platoon sergeant had just been wounded. (60)

The 2nd platoon, one officer and seven men, moved to the left as they debarked. Their mission was to destroy any enemy on the southeast end of the island. The 1st and 3rd platoons moved directly inland to relieve the situation on Hill 1 around the battalion CP. (61) (See Map G)

The 2nd Platoon met no resistance and rejoined the company on Hill 1. The 1st and 3rd Platoons killed several of the enemy as they moved up and around Hill 1. They killed most of the enemy around the battalion CP. G Company, from

(60) (61) Personal Knowledge.

the plateau, observed twelve of the enemy go into a cave on the south side of Hill 1. They radioed this information to E Company. The Company Commander ordered the Company Executive Officer, then 2nd Platoon Leader, to take a detail and "blow" the cave. The Company Executive Officer got three men to go with him to seal the cave. ~~They took two litter teams with them to bring back a dead machine gun crew of H Company which had been attached to Company G. The litter teams followed the demolition team. To get to the cave, it was necessary to crawl through approximately twelve dead enemy and the dead machine gun crew. This was done and the litter teams accomplished their mission and returned. The demolition team placed the charge and passed back through the enemy dead. The cave was demolished and all inside of it killed. Several minutes later, one of the men of E Company noticed one of the supposedly dead enemy, those which the demolition team had passed through twice, crawling slowly down the hill. He killed the crawling man. (62)~~ *see*

At about 1000, 4 April 1945, E Company Commander was called to the Battalion Headquarters to take over the job of Battalion Executive Officer. This made the Company Executive Officer, then acting as 2nd Platoon Leader, the Company Commander. (63)

The Company continued to patrol the beaches. The 3rd Platoon patrolled the beach on the south side of the island and found no enemy. The 1st Platoon patrolled the beach on

(62) (63) Personal Knowledge.

the north side and killed seven. Some of these seven were coaxed to surrender. They refused to do so. (64) The Company returned to Hill 1 and set up a perimeter around the Battalion CP for the night. (See Map H) For the next six days the company remained at this location patrolling the island every day to destroy any enemy that slipped out of the pits during the night. (65) *End*

During this time the engineers built a pipe line from the south beach to the pits. (See Map H) The pipe was connected to an LCM loaded with a pump and tanks holding about 3,000 gallons of gas and oil mixture. This gas and oil mixture was pumped into the east pit on the 5th of April and ignited by a WP mortar shell. Enemy fire still came from the west pit. (66) The next day, 6 April, the process was repeated on the West pit and another 3,000 gallons of gas and oil mixture was ignited with a WP shell in the west pit. This seemed to give much better results than the process on 5 April 1945. Thus, it was planned to repeat the process on the west pit and add demolitions. On 7 April 1945, two 500 pound bombs were lowered down the ventilator shaft into the tunnel on the north side of the island. At the same time a 500 pound charge of TNT was placed in the east entrance of the tunnel. (See Map H) 3,000 gallons of oil and gas were again pumped into the west pit. All troops moved off the plateau on Hill 2 and the gas and oil mixture was ignited by WP mortar shells. Following this, the two

(64) (65) Personal Knowledge; (66) A-1, p. 52; A-2 Caballe Island; A-3, p. 16.

500 pound bombs and the 500 pound TNT charge were detonated. This resulted in a tremendous fire and numerous explosions underground. The fire and explosions continued on into the night and the next day. (67)

On 9 April 1945, a prisoner was taken in Manila Bay as he attempted to swim away from Caballo. He was taken to the Battalion Rear CP on Corregidor and interrogated. He volunteered to go back into the pits and attempt to get the others to surrender and to report how many were still there. (68)

On 10 April 1945, this prisoner was taken to the west tunnel entrance and freed to go back into the pits. As he started into the pits, he hesitated and took the shoes off of a dead man at the entrance to the tunnel. He put these shoes on himself and proceeded into the tunnel and pits.

(69) After spending about an hour in the pits, he returned and reported: All automatic weapons had been reduced, food and water were exhausted and there were twenty enemy and 18 rifles with about 10 rounds of ammunition each in the pits. The enemy in the pits refused to surrender. They indicated that they would either make another banzai attack or commit hari-kari. (70)

Company E was withdrawn from Caballo Island on 10 April 1945, and moved back to Corregidor to prepare for its next operation. (71)

A patrol from Company G entered the pits on 13 April

(67) A-1, p. 52-54; A-2 Caballo Island; A-3, p. 16; A-5, p. 78; Personal Knowledge; (68) A-2 Caballo Island; (69) Personal Knowledge; (70) A-2 Caballo Island; (71) A-2 Caballo Island; Personal Notes.

1945. They killed one already wounded enemy and counted fifty dead. (72) The 2nd Battalion was relieved of the responsibility of Caballo Island the same day. (73)

During the operation there had been 229 enemy killed, 50 found dead and 3 captured. (74) Of these, Company E had killed 202 plus possibly some of the 50 found dead. (75)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The fact that the Company Commander had been able to take all of the company officers and non-commissioned officers to a vantage point from which they could observe the ground they were to operate over was of great assistance to the success of this operation. Also, in issuing the order from this vantage point it was possible for the Company Commander to stress particular points and assure himself that everyone understood the details.

There was adequate time allowed for individual preparation and orientation of all personnel prior to departure for the assault.

The battalion plan was sound and its execution accomplished without confusion.

Coordination and cooperation between the Army, Navy and Air Corps was excellent.

The preparatory fires of the Navy, the Artillery and the Air Corps undoubtedly drove the enemy underground prior

(72) (73) A-2 Caballo Island; (74) A-1, p. 54 & 123; A-2, Caballo Island; (75) A-7, p. 10; Personal Knowledge.

to the landing by the assault troops. The time between the lifting of these fires and the time it took the enemy to recover was adequate for the assault troops to gain a firm foothold on the island without a casualty.

Since the mopping-up troops followed the assault company so closely, it was possible for Company E to commit all three rifle platoons on line and not employ a support. This, also, assisted the assault company in by-passing a strong point in so far as the mopping-up company could immediately engage the enemy being by-passed.

Marking the mines, by the leading units as they passed through, enabled troops in rear to avoid them and assisted the engineers in locating the mines. This, undoubtedly, saved many lives.

It would have been impossible to move across the two knolls on Hill 2 without casualties if smoke had not been available. This smoke was well placed considering the small target and the wind.

The decision of the Battalion Commander to burn the enemy out of the pits, instead of forcing entry into the pits, was a wise decision. The cost of lives and equipment, as well as time, would have been far greater had entry been forced into the pits.

The trick of playing dead, used by the enemy, was an old trick. However, it was used successfully against our troops on numerous occasions during the Pacific Campaign.

The fact that the coxswain, on the LCM which deposited

the squad on the south side of the island, knew the limitations and capabilities of his craft possibly saved the lives of many men in Company E. If this LCM had beached and been unable to withdraw, the entire company would have been trapped inside the craft with a machine gun firing directly into it.

The operation was a success and the mission accomplished. The first convoy of American ships entered Manila Bay while this operation was in process. (76)

LESSONS

1. Amphibious landings initiated in daylight hours enable the troops to move rapidly through obstacles with a minimum of confusion and delay.
2. Preparatory fires, while not always inflicting casualties, keep the enemy neutralized until the infantry can establish itself in a position to accomplish its mission.
3. Marking located mines by leading elements of advancing troops enable the troops following to avoid the mines and reduces the hazard of the engineers in locating these mines.
4. Troops should inspect and be positive that all enemy being passed are dead or secured in such a manner as to not be a menace at a later time.
5. Smoke is essential in screening on terrain that is completely void of vegetation or depressions through which troops can be moved.

(76) Personal Knowledge.

6. Company officers and non-commissioned officers must, at all times, be prepared to take over jobs of the next higher level or next lower level on a moment's notice.

7. Troops operating on precipitous terrain should make arrangements to carry rope with them prior to starting an operation. (It would probably be best if each soldier carried a short section of light weight, high tensile strength rope.)

8. Landing crafts discharging troops in deep water, where the ramp does not touch the beach, may cause additional avoidable casualties.

9. Planning, coordination and cooperation of the highest degree between the arms and branches of the service ^{are} is essential to any amphibious operation.